

Wisconsin Forestry Notes

October 2003

Wisconsin DNR - Division of Forestry

"Wisconsin's forests are vitally important to the state's environmental and economic health," Governor Doyle said. "Forests provide an array of benefits and I believe strongly that we must realize these benefits in a manner that ensures both we and future generations of Wisconsin citizens enjoy the same range and extent of benefits associated with our forests."

"One of the issues that I will ask the council to tackle right away is sustainable forest certification," Governor Doyle said. "Certification affords us an opportunity to share with consumers across the globe Wisconsin's long-standing commitment to practicing sustainable forestry."

Governor convenes new Forestry Council

The first meeting of the new Council on Forestry was held September 26 in Madison. The Council advises the Governor, Legislature, DNR and others on issues pertaining to Wisconsin's forests. In his announcement Governor Doyle said, "The challenges facing our forests are significant and include increasing forest fragmentation, a forest industry competing in an increasingly global economy, exotic species invading our forests, increasing development in fire prone areas, and increasing competition among different recreational users. I am confident this council will meet these and other challenges head-on." The 19-member council includes representatives of institutions of higher learning, state government, the logging, lumber, and paper industries, conservation organizations, and the public. Council members are: Dennis Brown - Rhinelander, Leon Church - Appleton, Fred Clark - Baraboo, Paul DeLong - Madison, Jon Geenen - Kaukauna, Byron Hawkins - Bangor, Bill Horvath - Stevens Point, Mary Jean Huston - Madison, Kenneth Ottman - Milwaukee, Robert Rogers - Custer, Fred Souba (Chair) - Wisconsin Rapids, Jeff Stier - Madison, William Ward - Green Bay, Rep. Mary Hubler - Rice Lake, Rep. Donald Friske - Merrill, Sen. Roger Breske - Eland, Sen. Russ Decker - Schofield, Eugene Schmit - Tomahawk and James Heerey - Rice Lake.

Forest certification plans in Wisconsin

Wisconsin's state forest management programs will be assessed for possible "sustainability certification" in a plan announced by Governor Jim Doyle. Sustainability certification will ultimately ensure that Wisconsin producers will continue to be able to compete in the increasingly global marketplace. Governor Doyle, who addressed the Council on Forestry at its inaugural meeting last week in Madison, directed the council to pursue sustainable forest certification in order to ensure continued demand for Wisconsin forest products. The effort is part of the Governor's "Grow Wisconsin" action plan to get the state economy moving again. Certification assures consumers of forest products that the raw materials in their purchases originated from a forest managed under recognized sustainable management practices.

"My vision for Wisconsin is to compete at the high end," Governor Doyle said. "But moving toward the high end doesn't mean abandoning our traditional industries like forestry - it means strengthening these sectors so that we can use our high quality products and other strengths to continue to be competitive in the global economy. Sustainable forest certification is one tool we can use to give timber producers, mills, and ultimately printing industries in Wisconsin a competitive advantage over other businesses across the country and the globe that produce products that are not certified as sustainably produced."

Forest certification programs identify lands meeting national and international standards for environmental, social and economically responsible management. Three areas of Wisconsin's forest management program will be studied: the State Forest Program, covering nearly 500,000 acres of state-managed forestland; the County Forest Program, involving 2.4 million acres of forest; and lands in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program covering 1.5 million acres of forest land. State and County Forest programs will be compared against standards of the Forest Stewardship Council and the Sustainable Forest Initiative. The MFL program will be assessed under those systems and the American Tree Farm Program.

DNR Chief State Forester Paul DeLong said, "Sustainable forest management is not new in Wisconsin. The fact is, we've had a long-standing commitment to sustainable forest management. What this assessment will do is examine our practices in light of recognized standards. This will allow us to better demonstrate our high quality products to manufacturers and ultimately, the consumer."

Tree seedling sales start on Monday

Sales for Spring 2004 planting stock from the state forest nurseries will begin on Monday, October 6th. Forest landowners may purchase tree and shrub seedlings for reforestation and conservation projects. This year the state nursery program will unveil a new ordering process allowing landowners to submit their tree and shrub applications online. In previous years, payment was required with the application but this year customers will receive a billing invoice and order confirmation in the mail. This new process is designed to reduce problems with incorrect payments and greatly reduce the number of refunds nursery staff must issue each year as well as offering the convenience of Internet ordering. Orders are still welcomed via regular mail also, but between October 6 and February 1 landowners are invited to complete and submit their tree and shrub applications online at: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry/Nursery/order/index.htm>

Wisconsin Forestry Hall of Fame inductees named

Increase A. Lapham, an early forest conservationist, and Eugene Schmit, a long-time leader in county forestry, were selected as 2003 inductees in the Wisconsin Forestry Hall of Fame.

Increase A. Lapham, 1811 – 1875, has been called the “father of forest conservation in Wisconsin.” An 1855 article written by Lapham stated, “Though we have at present in almost every part of Wisconsin an abundant supply of wood for all our present purposes, the time is not far distant when, owing to increased population and increased demand from neighboring states, a scarcity will begin to be felt.” Lapham chaired a special forestry commission formed by the legislature in 1867 and issued a 100-page report on forest destruction in Wisconsin.

According to an article in the September 1921 issue of Wisconsin Magazine of History published by the Wisconsin Historical Society, he began to “agitate for the preservation of our forest wealth far in advance of anyone else.” The 1921 Wisconsin Magazine of History article concluded, “To Increase A. Lapham, the state’s first great scientist, belongs the credit of seeing the need of forest conservation a generation in advance of his fellows, and of doing his utmost to direct their attention to the problem.”

Eugene J. Schmit, born in 1928, is a life-long advocate of forestry in Wisconsin. He was elected to the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors and appointed to the Lincoln County Forestry Committee in 1961. After only two short years as a leader in the county, he was elected chair of the Forestry Committee and served in that capacity until April of 2000.

During the early 1960s, Schmit was a key leader in the development of the Wisconsin County Forests Association, serving as president from 1978 to 2000. His foresight enabled twenty-eight counties to become a single voice in forging a permanent program for the management of 2.3 million acres of county forest lands. Over the past thirty years Schmit has been an active consultant to the DNR forestry program on forestry-related activities and has served on numerous committees and advisory teams.

The Wisconsin Forestry Hall of Fame was founded in 1984 by a group of public and private forestry organizations to recognize individuals, living or deceased, who have contributed significantly to the practice and progress of forestry in Wisconsin. An exhibit displaying plaques of all inductees is housed in the College of Natural Resources building on the UW-Stevens Point campus and is open for public viewing during school hours.

A new DNR Internet system allows landowners to submit an application for tree seedlings online this year. Seedlings produced at the three DNR nurseries can only be used for reforestation purposes.

The Wisconsin Forestry Hall of Fame honors individuals who have contributed significantly to the practice and progress of forestry in Wisconsin. The 2003 inductees are Increase Lapham, who directed early attention to forest destruction issues in the mid-1800s, and Gene Schmit, a current and long-time leader in forest conservation issues.

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